

ASSES EARS,

A F A B L E.

ADDRESSED TO THE AUTHOR OF

THE GOAT'S BEARD.

AS IN PRÆSENTI

LILLY'S GRAMMAR.

L O N D O N:

Printed for G. RILEY, Curzon-Street, May-Fair.

MDCCLXXVII.



T H E
A S S E S E A R S,
A F A B L E.

Immortal *Bard*, ordain'd to fit,
Sole arbiter of *British* wit;
Who whilom deign'd to trace the cause,
Whence *Hymen* joy and sorrow draws,
Who drew the mystic veil aside,
Which nuptial secrets used to hide,
And shew'd the various charms that lie,
Concentred in *variety*.
And now from eight old latin lines,
Where some small spark of genius shines,

To

To wire draw many sheets are able,
 Then call the monstrous work a fable :
 Say will you venture to regard,
 The product of an humble bard,
 Like you the bounds of sense who passes,
 And sings of Monkeys, Goats, and Asses ?

In former days, no matter when,
 While beasts and birds could talk like men ;
 No matter where, on some large plain,
 Great *Jove* convened the savage train ;
 ‘ Long have my altars been supplied,
 ‘ With scanty dues’, he angry cried,
 ‘ So strong the force of mortal pride,
 ‘ Man’s venal race had rather wait
 ‘ On kings and ministers of state,
 ‘ From whom are temporal blessings given
 ‘ Than stay the slow rewards of Heaven,

And

‘ And scarce a bard since Hesiod’s time,
 ‘ To me addresses votive rhyme.
 ‘ Now hear! since graceless human kind,
 ‘ Are to ingratitude inclin’d,
 ‘ ’Tis my intent from you to chuse,
 ‘ A willing votary of the *Muse*:
 ‘ Merit alone shall here decide,
 ‘ Let none his powers or talents hide,
 ‘ And he who best becomes his place,
 ‘ As laureat of the bestial race,
 ‘ For ornament perpetual wears,
 ‘ To deck his head, these spacious ears
 ‘ Which erst to *Midas* were assign’d,
 ‘ To mark the monarch’s critic mind,
 ‘ (From no mean hand the honor flow’d,
 ‘ *Phœbus* himself the gift bestow’d),
 ‘ And tho’ of late some rhiming fool,
 ‘ Has turn’d the whole to ridicule,

‘ I who must know my son’s intent,

‘ Declare it was a favour meant.’

Applauding murmurs fill’d the crou’d ;

Who to the God respectful bow’d.

First starts the sprightly *Monkey* forth,

Depending on his comic worth;

But hisses sent from every side,

Confound at once his silly pride,

This active mimic might beguile,

Their features from the placid smile,

And by his oft repeated joke,

Convulsive laughter might provoke,

Laughter, proscrib’d by *Stanhope’s* pen

Amongst the better sort of men,

Fit only *Momus* to surprize,

And shake the galleries of the skies.

Bold *Renard* next with artful grin,

And sly grimace his claim put in,

But he at once was judg'd unfit,
 Convicted of attempts at wit.
 The *Dog* was scouted on pretence,
 Of having shewn some marks of sense.
 Next shaggy *Bruin* to be heard,
 With leer uncouth, his suit prefer'd :
 What tho' his form could boast no grace,
 No gentle smiles adorn'd his face,
 His mental graces all must own,
 To all his polish'd sense was known ;
Gay had in verse proclaim'd of yore,
 How well his hands could grasp the oar,
 Contract with cautious care his sail,
 Or spread his canvass to the gale,
 Since which with venturous bark he had try'd,
 New shores, and climates far and wide ;
 Had dar'd the rage of winds and seas,
 Eager to view the *Hebrides*,

From

From whence he knew full well to write,
Of *Ossian* and the *second fight*.

The crowd at first with clamorous breath,
Cried *Bruin* well deserv'd the wreath,

When *Envy* with malignant tongue,
Of other writings instant sung,

Where sense and genius had been found ;
Soon went this sentence harsh around :

‘ Tho’ for your voyage the envied meed,

‘ Might to your brows have been decreed,

‘ And well your tracts of politics,

‘ Might on your head the trophy fix,

‘ Yet as some things which once you writ,

‘ Are stigmatiz’d with sense and wit,

‘ We deem you for the place unfit.’

Now swell the feather’d tribe their throats,

Echoes the air with pleasing notes,

When

When thus the *As* with brayings loud,

Boldly harangues the list'ning crowd;

' What shall these shrill-ton'd birds now dare,

' To pierce with childish din the air,

' Shall they now chirp, and scream, and squeak,

' When I thus condescend to speak ?'

At once they stop as by consent,

For merit's ever diffident ;

When spur'd by high ambitious views,

The solemn beast his talk pursues.

' Ye brutes of whatsoever race,

' Whether the pathless woods ye trace,

' Or o'er the flow'ry meadows stray,

' Or plow aloft th' etherial way,

' So fit as me who can be found,

' To govern on poetic ground ?

' Did ever in my vacant eye,

' One spark of genius seem to lie,

' Or did my voice those looks belie ?

‘ Say were my brayings ever fraught,
‘ With any thing that seem’d a thought ?
‘ Have I, on any one pretence,
‘ Been known to deviate into fense ?
‘ Who then is versed like me to cheer,
‘ With tranquil sounds Jove’s quiet ear,
‘ And lull to rest the high abodes,
‘ With *New-year songs* and *Birth-day Odes* ?
‘ Blest with your votes, th’ immortal train,
‘ Shall praise my soul-composing strain,
‘ Which ne’er, by frantic genius drest,
‘ Shall break the Gods eternal rest,
‘ Placid my verse shall flow along,
‘ As *Sternhold’s* and as *Hopkins’* song.’

More had he said, but by the croud,
Was stopt with acclamations loud,
While *Jove* approv’d the rabbles voice,
And ratifi’d the public choice.

And

And from that hour the *A/s* remains,
Unrival'd *laureat* of the plains,
And o'er his vacant forehead wears,
The envied badge of spreading ears.

F I N I S.



